

Standardized Testing and Reporting Program

General Questions and Answers about STAR – February 1999

What is the test window for the STAR testing program?

The test window is March 15 to May 14, 1999. Two make-up days are required to be completed within 10 days of the last day of regularly scheduled testing. All testing is to be completed by May 25, 1999. There is no provision in the law that permits a district to waive the test window.

What types of materials are appropriate as test preparation for the Stanford Achievement Test?

Education Code Section 60611 and Section 854 of Title 5 prohibit a district, school or teacher from using specific programs or materials that are specifically formulated or intended to prepare pupils for the designated achievement or primary language test. The California Department of Education (CDE) and the Office of Legislative Counsel interpret this to mean that any test preparation materials that have been developed to prepare students for the Stanford 9 **cannot** be used. This includes using Form S of the test to prepare students or as part of a pre/post-testing program. It would also preclude the development of sample test items by a local district or school where the sample test items were designed to represent items found on the Stanford 9. In selecting test preparation materials, districts should consider whether or not the same test preparation materials would be used if another test had been designated as the statewide test. If one can answer yes to such a question, then the material is probably more general in nature and appropriate. If one answers no to such a question, then the materials are probably specific to the Stanford 9 and are thus not appropriate. This law and the discussion above also applies to SABE/2, the designated primary language test.

Is there a document that maps the Stanford 9 and the augmentation to the state adopted standards?

Yes. There is such a document. It is available at star@cde.ca.gov (Internet).

How can alternative education programs that experience great fluctuations in enrollment avoid the penalty resulting from ordering excess test materials?

The penalty for ordering excess materials only applies in a situation when a district places a second order for test booklets and does not use at least 90% of the second order. There is no penalty associated when a district only places one order for test materials.

What demographic data are required to be reported and what demographic data are optional?

All demographic data to be reported are required. Districts are expected to make the best effort possible to obtain all demographic data.

What is the new override procedure for the pre-identification of answer documents for the Stanford 9?

This year the override procedure has been modified so that information provided by the district for the pre-identification of the answer document will not be over-ridden if different information is indicated on the answer document. Information that is not provided as part of the pre-identification and is identified on the answer document will be read and linked to the student information on the pre-identification data file. For example, if information about parent education level is not pre-identified and students provide this information on the answer document by bubbling in the parent education level, the override procedure will pick up the parent education level without losing the pre-identified data. However, if the parent education level had been pre-identified for that student then it would not be over-ridden by the information provided on the answer document.

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Can a special CDS code such as "999" be used for students in private non-public schools or for other groups of students for which a district might want to disaggregate test scores?

No. Special CDS codes can not be used. Harcourt Brace Educational Measurement (HBEM) will only accept orders for official CDS codes. For programs administered through the district office the district CDS code can be used. The student demographic data collection form also has space for districts to assign program or student ID numbers that could be used at the local level to disaggregated test results.

What is the definition of "certificated" employee as test administrator?

"Certificated" means any person holding a credential from the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

What is the testing time for the augmented tests (language arts and mathematics)?

The testing time for the language arts and mathematics augmentation at grades 2 through 7 is 65 minutes per section for a total of 130 minutes. At grades 8 through 11, the testing time is 75 minutes per section for a total of 150 minutes. Each section must be administered in one session.

How will test scores be reported on the Internet this year?

Legislation requires that scores for 1999 STAR testing be reported for the state as a whole and disaggregated by gender, language fluency and socio-economic status.

How will test scores be reported to parents this year?

A new home report is being developed that will provide both norm referenced test (NRT) scores for the Stanford 9 and separate scores for the augmented tests in language arts and math. The NRT scores will be reported as percentiles. The augmentation test scores will be reported as number of items correctly answered out of the number of items possible.

Is it planned to provide content cluster scores for the augmented test items?

At this time there is no plan to report content cluster scores for the augmented test items.

Is it planned to develop "expectancy bands" or comparison groups based on demographic data such as SES and language fluency?

No. It is not anticipated that expectancy bands or comparison groups will be developed.

Are districts required to comply with the minimum proficiency testing requirements since STAR test augmentation items are being added that are aligned to the state standards?

Yes. Districts must still comply with the minimum proficiency testing requirements. These requirements are still in law.

What is the relationship of the pupil promotion and retention legislation (AB1626) to the STAR program?

The CDE has produced a detailed information packet about the pupil promotion and retention legislation. The document was transmitted to all district and county superintendents with a cover letter from the superintendent on November 30, 1998. The document is also available on the Internet at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ppr>.

What are the apportionment amounts for the Stanford 9 and SABE/2 and what is the payment to the test publishers?

The apportionment amount for the Stanford 9 is \$8.00 with pre-identification and \$7.85 without pre-identification. The test publisher is to be paid \$5.21 for each pupil tested, \$.31 for pre-identification (if used), and tax up to \$.44. The apportionment amount for SABE/2 is \$7.18 with pre-identification and \$7.03 without pre-identification. The test publisher is to be paid \$4.45 per pupil tested, tax up to \$.38 and a pre-identification fee per agreement with the test publisher.

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Questions and Answers about the Augmentation of the Stanford 9 Test in Mathematics

What is the relationship of the math augmentation to a student's grade level?

Students in grades 2 through 7 and grade 11 will take the math augmentation test designated for their grade level. The test items for the augmented portion of the test will be in the same grade-level booklet the student uses for the Stanford 9 portion of the STAR test.

The State Board of Education (SBE) has adopted content standards that call for students to master the content of algebra I in grade 8; geometry in grade 9, and algebra II in grade 10. The augmentation to the Stanford 9 is designed to reflect the achievement called for in the grade-specific standards. For 1999, students in grades 8, 9, and 10 will take the augmented section of the mathematics test based on their current course enrollment in mathematics rather than on their actual grade level.

May students use calculators for the augmented mathematics tests?

Students may not use calculators for any math test that is part of the STAR program. The exception is special education students whose Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) specify the use of a calculator. The use of a calculator will be noted as an accommodation on the student answer document. **Only** students with the IEP specification may use a calculator.

Should students in pre-algebra take the algebra I test? What about students in the first year of a two year algebra I course?

Students should take the algebra I test when they are enrolled in algebra I or its equivalent. Students in a two year algebra I class should take the test during the second year of the two year sequence.

What test(s) should students in "combination college prep math" classes take?

Both the traditional sequence tests (algebra I, geometry, algebra II) and the integrated math tests use the same pool of items across the three tests in the sequence. All the items are intended for students in classes that meet the University of California "a to f" requirements. More specifically, the courses must meet the UC "c" requirement for mathematics. Test coordinators uncertain about the status of certain math courses should check with the district math specialist, high school math department chairperson, or high school UC counselor.

If students in a block schedule took algebra I in the fall semester block but are not enrolled in any math in the spring semester, should they take the algebra I test? What about students enrolled in the spring semester in algebra I?

Students in block schedule classes should take the test that corresponds to the class in which they are enrolled. If students took algebra I in the fall block and are not currently in a math class, no augmented math test is required for those students. All students take the Stanford 9 math test for their grade level regardless of class enrollment. Students currently enrolled in the spring semester algebra I block class must take the algebra I test. Districts may wish to reconsider early testing for those students. Districts that wish to test fall semester block schedule students in any of the relevant math classes may do so. Arrangements should be made with the test publisher to obtain information useful to the district about the performance of the two groups of students.

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Questions and Answers about the Augmentation of the Stanford 9 Test in Mathematics

If students who took math in the fall block and students who are taking math in the spring block are tested, will their scores be posted separately?

Schools will receive group scores on the augmented math tests only for those students in the grade level at which the standards are written. All grade 8 students and only grade 8 students taking the algebra I test will be included in the algebra I group score; all grade 8 students and only grade 8 students taking the integrated 1 test will be included in the integrated 1 group score; all grade 9 students and only grade 9 students taking geometry will be included in the geometry group score, and so on.

What math is assessed on the grade 11 augmentation test?

The grade 11 augmentation test, to be taken by all students in grade 11 regardless of math course enrollment, covers topics from algebra 1, geometry, algebra 2, and probability and statistics.

How will “cut points” for performance levels be set given the differences in the population of students taking the various tests this year and the students who will take the tests in future years?

This is a complex issue, and the answer is not known at this time.

What is the “foundations” score in mathematics?

The “foundations” score will be based on a student’s performance on a subset of items from the Stanford 9 mathematics test. The items for grades 2 through 7 were selected by a content review panel, designated by the State Board, and items for grades 8 through 11 were selected by Harcourt Brace Educational Measurement.

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Questions and Answers about the Primary Language Achievement Test for STAR

Which students must be tested with a primary language achievement test?

The law requires that students with a primary language other than English and enrolled in a California school for less than 12 months be tested in their primary language if a test is available. The law further provides that students enrolled for more than 12 months may be tested at the option of the district.

What primary language achievement tests can be used to test students whose primary language is not English?

The State Board of Education at the November 1998 board meeting designated the Spanish Assessment of Basic Education, Second Edition (SABE/2) as the primary language test for students whose primary language is Spanish. No other primary language tests were designated.

Will districts receive an apportionment for students required to be tested and for students tested at district option?

Yes. Districts can receive for apportionment for students that are required to be tested and for students that are tested at district option. Districts will receive a basic apportionment of \$7.03 for each student tested. Districts will also receive an addition \$.15 apportionment if the pre-identification service available from the test publisher is used.

Can previously purchased SABE/2 testing materials be used, or must new materials be purchased from the test publisher?

Previously purchased SABE/2 test materials can not be used for the STAR primary language achievement test program. Districts must purchase new SABE/2 test materials. Previously purchased materials should be stored in a secure area to ensure that students are not exposed to the test prior to administration.

What is the testing window for the administration of the primary language achievement test?

The testing window for administering the primary language test is March 15 – May 14, 1999 with two required make-up days no later than 10 days from the last day of regular testing. All testing must be completed by May 25, 1999.

May the SABE/2 test be used to assess students whose primary language is English and are enrolled in a Spanish immersion instruction program?

Yes. The SABE/2 test may be used to assess students whose primary language is English. However, these students can not be reported for apportionment purposes, and the test results are not to be reported with the students required to be tested in their primary language. It is important that English language students tested with SABE/2 are clearly identified to ensure that the test publisher does not report their scores with the primary language students.

Did the State Board designate primary language achievement tests for languages other than Spanish for the STAR program?

No. The SBE only designated a primary language achievement test for Spanish. To receive STAR apportionment for testing in languages other than Spanish, the proposed test to be used must be submitted to the Department for SBE approval prior to administration of the test.

Questions about the
Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program
should be directed to the
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California Department of Education
(916) 657-3011